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# *Creative Writing Division Rules*

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VA Staff: Keep track of all Veterans who compete/enter through your VA facility and enter their information into **Local Level Participation form on page 14 of the handbook**. **Send this form to [Arts4Vets@va.gov](mailto:Arts4Vets@va.gov) when your local competition has ended.**

Entries submitted into the Creative Writing Division will be judged based upon the merit of the original work, creative content, message clarity, use of language, originality of topic or idea, and overall strength.

**Facilities may submit the top three finalists in each category.** A formal competition is not required at the local level but is strongly encouraged. All eligible Veterans should be given the opportunity to participate regardless of degree of talent.

All gold medal winners from the national competition in the creative writing division will be invited to attend the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival.

**First-place winning entries at the national level of the competition will be printed in a booklet** and will be distributed at the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival in April of 2023.

1. Entries in the creative writing division must have been completed after October 1, 2022.
2. All entries submitted into the Creative Writing Division must be original compositions written solely by the eligible Veteran who is submitting the entry.
3. Entries must be submitted as Word documents in 12-point font. Do not send PDF attachments.
4. Entries must be submitted as text only. Do not send documents with pictures or graphics. Only the text of the entry will be judged.
5. Include the Veteran's name, VA facility, category, and title of the piece at the top of the Word document entry.
6. Judges reserve the right to move an entry to the appropriate category or disqualify the entry if rules are not followed.
7. Collections of poems, essays, stories, etc. submitted as one entry will not be allowed.

*Note: VA staff contact persons will be notified via E-mail with the competition results.*

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## *Creative Writing Categories*

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1. **Rhyming Poetry-Military Experience** – A verse composition related to military experience, **no longer than 48 lines** in length.
2. **Rhyming Poetry-Inspirational** – An inspirational verse composition, **no longer than 48 lines** in length.
3. **Rhyming Poetry-General Topic** – A general topic verse composition, **no longer than 48 lines** in length.
4. **Non-Rhyming Poetry-Military Experience** – A composition related to military experience, **no longer than 48 lines** in length.
5. **Non-Rhyming Poetry-Inspirational** – An inspirational composition, **no longer than 48 lines** in length.
6. **Non-Rhyming Poetry-General Topic** – A general topic composition, **no longer than 48 lines** in length.
7. **Personal Essay-Military Experience** – A non-fiction essay, **no longer than 850 words**, written in ordinary speech or writing (not poetry) by one eligible Veteran that is a discussion of military experience from the author's personal point of view.
8. **Personal Essay-Inspirational** – A non-fiction essay, **no longer than 850 words**, written in ordinary speech or writing (not poetry) by one eligible Veteran that is an inspirational discussion from the author's personal point of view.
9. **Personal Essay-General Topic** – A non-fiction essay, **no longer than 850 words**, written in ordinary speech or writing (not poetry) by one eligible Veteran that is a general topic discussion from the author's personal point of view.
10. **Humor** – All types of works which employ humor as the primary component should be submitted in this category. **Poetry entries should be no longer than 48 lines and prose entries must not exceed 850 words.**
11. **Short, Short Story** – A short story, **no longer than 1,000 words**. The story must have a beginning, middle, and an end.
12. **Short Script** – Part of a script for one or more characters. Scripts should document the movement, scene descriptions, acting style instructions, and dialogue of the characters and should be written in a screenplay format and resemble the blueprint for a play, television show, or film. Short Script entries written in prose format (written language that follows the

natural flow of speech, with words and phrases that build full sentences and paragraphs) will not be accepted. Entries in this category **must not exceed 850 words**.

- 13. Special Recognition** - Individual or group. Entries by Veterans who exhibit creative expression through use of creative writing while possessing significant physical or psychological limitations. The intent of this category is to reinforce the concept of the arts as therapy, where individuals use artistic expression to facilitate successful treatment outcomes. **Poetry entries should be no longer than 48 lines and prose entries must not exceed 850 words.**

Entries in this category **MUST** also include:

- **A Word document containing a typed statement/narrative** (50 to 250 words) composed by a VA staff person or the Veteran explaining why the Veteran is deserving of special recognition. **Entries submitted without a write-up will not be judged.**
- Consent form 10-3203 and 10-5345 (included in this handbook) must be signed and dated by the Veteran. The staff contact person submitting the entry for the Veteran should safeguard the signed consent forms at their VA facility.